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IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

BEFORE THE BOARD OF PATENT APPEALS AND INTERFERENCES

EX PARTE THOMAS ET AL.

Application for Patent

Filed June 16, 1998

Serial No. 09/098,279

Group Art Unit 2613

Examiner: VO, Tung T.

FOR:

METHOD AND SYSTEM FOR REMOTE MONITORING AND CONTROL OVER A COMPUTER NETWORK

SUPPLEMENTAL APPEAL BRIEF

TO APPEAL BRIEF FILED MAY 23, 2005

AND REINSTATEMENT OF APPEAL

02/03/2006 EAREGAY1 00000003 500805   09098279

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TABLE OF AUTHORITIES

CASES:

REAL PARTY IN INTEREST

The real party in interest are the inventors.

II. RELATED APPEALS AND INTERFERENCES

It is believed that there are no other appeals or interferences which will directly affect or be directly affected by or have a bearing on the Board's decision in the pending appeal.

III. STATUS OF THE CLAIMS

This application was filed June 16, 1998 claiming domestic priority of U.S. Provisional Application No. 60/051,489, filed July 1, 1997. Claims 1, 4, 8, 26 and 31 were amended and claim 3 was cancelled in Amendment (A) filed on January 29, 2001. Claims 1, 8, 12, 13 and 26 were amended, and claims 6 and 10 were cancelled by Amendment (B) on October 1, 2001. Claims 19-25 were cancelled by Amendment (C) filed on February 22, 2002. Claims 32-44 were added by Supplemental Amendment (D) filed on February 25, 2002. In a Second Supplemental Amendment (E) filed on February 25, 2002, claims 1, 4, 7-9, 16-18, 33, 36, 39 and 44, and new claims 45-66 were added. Claims 1, 8, 39, 47, 49 and 52 were amended, and claims 32-38, 45-46 and 51 were cancelled. In a Final Office Action dated November 19, 2002 (Final Rejection), all claims (with the exception of claims 26-31) were finally rejected. Claims 1, 2, 4, 5, 7-9, 11-18, 26-31, 39-44, 47-50 and 52-66 were then appealed (Appeal I). In an Office Action dated July 30, 2003, the Examiner withdrew the Final Rejection and issued a Restriction Requirement. On September 8, 2003, a response to the Restriction Requirement was filed. In response to the Office Action of November 5, 2003, Amendment F was filed May 5, 2004 (resubmitted June 8, 2004). In a Final Office Action dated August 25, 2004 (Final Rejection), claims 1, 2, 4, 5, 7-9 and 11-18 were finally rejected, with the Examiner withdrawing and thus refusing

to further examine 26-31, 39-44, 47-50 and 52-66. Claims 1, 2, 4, 5, 7-9 and 11-18 were then appealed (Appeal II).

In response to Appeal II (Office Action dated August 31, 2005), the Examiner removed the restriction and now, claims 1, 2, 4, 5, 7-9 and 11-18, 26-31, 39-44, 47-50 and 52-66 remain pending.

No claim stands allowed at this time.

IV. STATUS OF AMENDMENTS

All Amendments filed have been entered.

V. SUMMARY OF THE CLAIMED SUBJECT MATTER

The invention relates to improved techniques to remotely monitor locations and/or detect activity at the locations. Page 7. The monitoring and/or detecting is achieved over a network, such as global computer network. Pages 8-9. Claim 1 (method) and claim 8 (system) pertain to improved techniques can advantageously operate on general purpose computers and can efficiently make use of network bandwidth.

The remote monitoring of locations can be achieved by efficiently transmitting images over a network to a remote machine located at a remote location. Pages 7-10; Pages 11-15. In one embodiment, the efficiency is facilitated by comparing a current image with a reference image, and then only transmitting the current image if it differs from the reference image by more than a predetermined threshold amount. Figs. 7A-7B; Figs. 8 and 9A-9B; Pages 14-16. The remote monitoring can also operate as an alarm system or provide intruder detection based on detected changes in images from a locally provided camera. Figs. 7A-7B. In another embodiment, a motion detector can be used to detect motion and then trigger transmission of an image.

Further, in one embodiment, the transmitting of the images is done with electronic mail. Fig. 8. In another embodiment, the images can be stored to an

Internet server and thus are made remotely accessible over a network (e.g., global computer network) via a web browser application.

Independent claim 1 provides a surveillance method for operating a general purpose computer to provide remote surveillance of an internal area of a building. The method includes: (a) receiving a surveillance image from a local camera directed at the internal area of the building (see Figure 5A and pages 10-11); (b) comparing the surveillance image with a reference image to produce a comparison result (see Figure 6); (c) detecting presence of an activity condition based on the comparison result (see Figures 7A and 7B, page 14); and (d) notifying an interested user of the activity condition when the presence of the activity condition is detected (see Figure 8, step 812). And, configuring, prior to said receiving, comparing, detecting and notifying, said general purpose computing device so as to automatically notify the interested user via a predetermined mailing address when an activity condition is subsequently detected (Figure 6 and text on page 12). The notifying includes at least transmitting the surveillance image to a remote computer over a global computer network automatically when the activity condition is detected, and said transmitting includes forming an electronic mail message having a predetermined mailing address, the predetermined mailing address being associated with the interested user and being provided during said configuring, and electronically mailing the surveillance image to the remote computer over the network using the electronic mail message (Figure 6 and text on page 12).

Independent claim 8 (see identifiers in claim 1) provides a system for providing remote visual monitoring of a location. The system includes: (a) a camera for obtaining an image of the location; (b) a remote computer having a display device capable of viewing images, said remote computer being remote from the location; (c) a local general purpose computer operatively connected to said camera, said local general purpose computer operates to receive the image from the camera and to determine whether an activity condition is present. And,

wherein, prior to providing remote visual monitoring, said local general purpose computer is configured so as to automatically notify a predetermined user via a predetermined mailing address when an activity condition is subsequently detected. And, wherein said local general purpose computer automatically forwards the image to said remote computer over a global computer network when the activity condition is present, and said local general purpose computer does not forward the image to said remote computer over the network when the activity condition is not present. When forwarding the image to said remote computer over the network, said local general purpose computer automatically creates an electronic mail message for the predetermined user associated with the remote computer, the electronic mail message having the image included or attached thereto, and then automatically sends the electronic mail message to the predetermined user via the predetermined mailing address.

Independent claim 26 (see identifiers in claim 1) provides a method for detecting an activity condition using a camera. The method includes (a) receiving a reference image from a camera directed in a predetermined direction; (b) storing a reference image; (c) receiving a current image from a camera directed in the predetermined direction; (d) comparing the current image with the reference image to detect an activity condition; and (e) signaling an alarm condition when said comparing detects the activity condition; the signaling of the alarm condition including the automatic transmission of an electronic mail message over a network to a remote computer, the message including at least one image from the camera to enable viewing of the activity condition that caused the signaling of the alarm condition. The electronic mail message is transmitted to an electronic mail address as was previously arranged during configuration.

Independent claim 39 (see identifiers in claim 1) provides a method for operating a general purpose computer to detect an activity condition using a camera. The method includes (a) receiving a reference image from a camera directed in a predetermined direction; (b) storing a reference image; (c) receiving

a current image from a camera directed in the predetermined direction; (d) comparing the current image with the reference image to detect an activity condition; (e) signaling an alarm condition when said comparing detects the activity condition without using any special purpose hardware other than the general purpose computer and the camera; (f) transmitting a message over a global computer network to a remote computer, the message including at least the current image, wherein the message being transmitted to the remote computer is an electronic mail message; and (g) configuring, prior to said receiving (a), storing (b), comparing (d), signaling (e) and transmitting (f), the general purpose computing device so as to automatically transmit an electronic mail message using a predetermined mailing address when an activity condition is subsequently detected.

Independent claim 49 (see identifiers in claim 1) provides a method for operating a general purpose computer to detect an activity condition using a camera. The method includes (a) receiving a reference image from a camera directed in a predetermined direction; (b) storing a reference image; (c) receiving a current image from a camera directed in the predetermined direction; (d) comparing the current image with the reference image to detect an activity condition; (e) signaling an alarm condition when said comparing detects the activity condition without using any special purpose hardware other than the general purpose computer and the camera; and (f) transmitting at least the current image over a network to a remote computer upon detecting the activity condition. The network comprises the Internet, and the remote computer is an Internet server that stores images from a plurality of different cameras, and wherein an interested user is able to view at least certain of the images by accessing the Internet server via a web browser application on a user computer.

Independent claim 53 provides (see identifiers in claim 1) a surveillance method for operating a general purpose computer to provide remote surveillance of an internal area of a building. The method includes: (a) receiving a surveillance image from a local camera directed at the internal area of the building; (b) comparing the surveillance image with a reference image to produce

a comparison result; (c) detecting presence of an activity condition based on the comparison result; and (d) notifying an interested user of the activity condition when the presence of the activity condition is detected. The notifying includes at least transmitting the surveillance image to a remote computer over a network automatically when the activity condition is detected. And, the network comprises the Internet and the remote computer is an Internet server that stores images from a plurality of different cameras, and wherein the interested user is thereafter able to view at least certain of the images from the local camera by accessing the Internet server via a web browser application on a user's computer.

Independent claim 58 (see identifiers in claim 1) a system for providing remote visual monitoring of a location. The system includes: (a) a camera for obtaining an image of the location; (b) an Internet server for storing images, said remote computer being remote from the location; (c) a user's computer having a display device capable of viewing images, said user computer being remote from the location; (d) a local general purpose computer operatively connected to said camera, said local general purpose computer operates to receive the image from the camera and to determine whether an activity condition is present. The local general purpose computer automatically forwards the image to said Internet server over a network when the activity condition is present, and said local general purpose computer does not forward the image to said Internet server over the network when the activity condition is not present. The network comprises the Internet and the Internet server stores the images forwarded thereto from said local general purpose computer, and wherein an interested user is thereafter able to view the images from the local camera by accessing the Internet server via a web browser application on said user's computer.

VI. GROUNDS OF REJECTION TO BE REVIEWED ON APPEAL

The issues presented on appeal are:

A.   Claims 1, 2, 4, 5, 7-9 and 11-18 26-31, 39-48 stand rejected as obvious over Ng (U.S. Patent 5,731,832) in view of Maeno (U.S. Patent 5283,644).

B.   Claims 1, 2, 4, 5, 7-9 and 11-18 26-31, 39-48 stand rejected as obvious over Ng (U.S. Patent 5,731,832) in view of Parulski et al. (US 6,573,927 B2).

VII. ARGUMENT

A.   Claims 1, 2, 4, 5, 7-9 and 11-18 26-31, 39-48 are patentable over Ng (U.S. Patent 5,731,832) in view of Maeno (U.S. Patent 5,283,644).

The Applicants would like to initially point out to the Board the delays and piecemeal examination and handling of this case by the Office. The non-provisional application was filed on June 16, 1998, and each time the Applicants successfully argued over a reference, the Office conducted another search. Although the Applicants support detailed examinations for quality purposes, the Applicants submit that the introduction of new art after each successful reply shows the lack of reasonableness by the Office at each examination stage. Indeed, this is the third Appeal Brief that Applicants have filed.

All of the Arguments presented in the last Appeal brief to distinguish over the main reference to Ng (U.S. Patent 5,731,832) are hereby <u>incorporated by reference</u> into this brief for sake of brevity.

Ng describes a system for detecting motion in a video signal. The system detects motion in a video signal by identifying differences between a current image frame and a reference image frame. A motion detection signal is generated by the system if a difference profile between the current image frame

and the reference image frame exceeds a threshold. Upon generation of a motion detection signal, the system may be configured to record the current image frame if the difference profile exceeds the threshold.

With the teachings of Ng in mind, the Maeno is presented by the Office to teach having the local computer automatically create an electronic mail message for a predetermined user and the message having an image attached thereto, and automatically sending the message including the image to the predetermined mailing address. Maeno, in the locations identified by the Examiner, simply discusses generating a report as shown in Fig. 4. The report will have remarks to introduce the location where an intruder was located. Additionally, if a picture was taken of the intruder, the picture of their face is contained on the report. The face may simply be a picture model, and not actually the true intruder. As discussed in Maeno, the report is then faxed to some station that is monitoring the location. The fax is sent via a predetermined transmission line or it can be sent over a private line. As noted in column 10, other transmission techniques may be used, but those are limited to telephone calls, transmission lines PT1, etc. This case was filed in 1991, and as such, one skilled in the art in 1997 would not be looking to pre-internet communications technologies to arrive at the presently claimed invention.

The Examiner arrives at the conclusion that the claims are unpatentable through hindsight analysis. As the Federal Circuit has so many times reiterated: "Hindsight analysis is clearly improper, since the statutory test is whether 'the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made.' " *In re Deminski*, 796 F.2d 436, 230 U.S.P.Q. 313 (Fed. Cir. 1986). That is, the selective combination of bits and pieces from each of the two references utilized by the Examiner to reject the claims is the result of hindsight gleaned from the invention itself. There is nothing in any of the cited references or any assertions as to the knowledge of those with ordinary skill in the art that would lead those skilled in the art to combine the references in the manner asserted by the Examiner.

Additionally, it has now been almost seven (7) years since the non-provisional application was filed, and the Office has attempted numerous combinations to imply that it would have been obvious to combine the teachings of the prior art to arrive at the claimed invention. It is submitted that the Office has taken each element of the claimed invention and has failed in many attempts to make a case for obviousness. This failure is evidenced by the Office's repeated attempts to find new art after arguments are filed traversing the hindsight constructed logic of the Office. If the rejected claims were so obvious, then clearly the Office could have made a better case for rejections in its many office actions listed in the state of the claims section. Instead, the Office continues to search for new art after each response by the Applicants, in hopes that the hindsight reconstruction of the claimed invention will be sufficient.

Further, to support such rejections based on a combination of references, the Examiner is required to provide evidence that suggests the desirability of the combination. *King Instrument Corp. v. Otari Corp.,* 767 F.2d 853, 226 U.S.P.Q. 402 (Fed. Cir. 1985). In Final Office Action, the Examiner did not provide sufficient evidence of record that would suggest the desirability of these combinations. The Examiner has merely asserted that it would be *obvious* to those skilled in the art to combine specific features of each of the references to allegedly produce the claimed invention.

The disparate teachings of Ng and Maeno, would not motivate one skilled in the art to combine these reference in the manner that the Examiner proposes. As noted above, one skilled in the art reading Ng would not be motivated to look to Maeno, when Maeno itself uses old technology that is not capable of operatively performing the claimed operations. For at least these reasons, the Applicants respectfully request the Board to reverse the Examiner.

B. **Claims 1, 2, 4, 5, 7-9 and 11-18 26-31, 39-48 are patentable over Ng (U.S. Patent 5,731,832) in view of Parulski et al. (US 6,573,927 B2).**

In the Office Action of August 31, 2005, the Examiner rejected Claims 1, 2, 4, 5, 7-9 and 11-18 26-31, 39-48 as obvious over Ng (U.S. Patent 5,731,832) in view of Parulski et al. (US 6,573,927 B2). Appellant respectfully disagrees.

Ng describes a system for detecting motion in a video signal. The system detects motion in a video signal by identifying differences between a current image frame and a reference image frame. A motion detection signal is generated by the system if a difference profile between the current image frame and the reference image frame exceeds a threshold. Upon generation of a motion detection signal, the system may be configured to record the current image frame if the difference profile exceeds the threshold.

Parulski et al. (Parulski) describes a system for reviewing pictures, generating print orders, saving pictures, etc. The user can order prints, email images, view album images, and manipulate the pictures as desired. In some examples, the user is able to add text, move pictures, add a surround and the like. The user can then enter their information, for billing purposes and to establish an account. As shown in Figure 4, the user's email address is also obtained.

The Examiner is using Parulski to teach the operation of having the local computer automatically create an electronic mail message for a predetermined user and the message having an image attached thereto, and automatically sending the message including the image to the predetermined mailing address. To support the combination, the Examiner is asserting that one skilled in the art would be motivated to combine the teachings of Ng and Parulski. Parulski is simply concerned with picture enhancing/modifying and ordering. These pictures are pictures taken by a user or by a user that wishes to have them developed or sent to other users. In the claimed operations, the recipient receives the image

that was taken automatically by the system in response to the detection of an activity condition. Parulski does not teach sending pictures to a recipient in response to the detection of an activity condition, but instead a user in Parulski's system can have pictures emailed to different recipients depending on the user's wants or desires. There is simply no link between the detection of an activity condition and the automated process of sending the message including the image to the predetermined mailing address.

Consequently, it is submitted that the Office's attempt to reconstruct the missing element in Ng with Parulski fails, as the art is dissimilar, the functionality would not work for Ng and the functionality would be contrary to the operations that are presently claimed.

Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that the Board reverse the Examiner's rejections and remand the application to the Examiner with directions to allow all claims.

CONCLUSION

For at least the reasons set forth in this Appeal Brief, the Board should reverse the Final Rejection and should order the Examiner to pass this application to allowance.
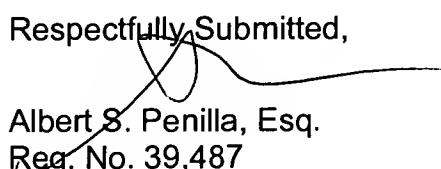
Applicants hereby petition for a two-month extension of time to respond to the Office Action of August 31, 2005. The response is in the form of this request for reinstatement of the appeal and this supplemental appeal brief.

The Notice of Appeal has been filed and an Appeal Brief (Appeal II) was filed on May 23, 2005. The Applicants hereby request reinstatement of the Appeal and hereby submit this Supplemental Brief, which addresses the newly cited art identified in the Office Action of August 31, 2005.

The two month extension of time fee is $225.00, and such amount should be charged to Deposit Account No. 50-0805 (Order No. ATC1P001).

If any additional fees are required in connection with the filing of this Supplemental Appeal Brief, the Commissioner is authorized to charged Deposit Account No. 50-0805 (Order No. ATC1P001).

Respectfully Submitted,

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VIII. APPENDIX

1.   (Previously Presented) A surveillance method for operating a general purpose computer to provide remote surveillance of an internal area of a building, comprising:

receiving a surveillance image from a local camera directed at the internal area of the building;

comparing the surveillance image with a reference image to produce a comparison result;

detecting presence of an activity condition based on the comparison result; and

notifying an interested user of the activity condition when the presence of the activity condition is detected,

configuring, prior to said receiving, comparing, detecting and notifying, said general purpose computing device so as to automatically notify the interested user via a predetermined mailing address when an activity condition is subsequently detected,

wherein said notifying includes at least transmitting the surveillance image to a remote computer over a global computer network automatically when the activity condition is detected, and

wherein said transmitting includes forming an electronic mail message having a predetermined mailing address, the predetermined mailing address being associated with the interested user and being provided during said configuring, and electronically mailing the surveillance image to the remote computer over the network using the electronic mail message.

2.   (Original) A surveillance method as recited in claim 1, wherein said detecting of the presence of the activity condition comprises:

comparing the comparison result with a predetermined threshold;

detecting the presence of the activity condition when the comparison result exceeds the predetermined threshold; and

detecting the lack of presence of the activity condition when the comparison result does not exceed the predetermined threshold.

3.   (Cancelled)

4.   (Previously Presented) A surveillance method as recited in claim 1, wherein the network comprises the Internet, and

wherein said transmitting operates to transmit the surveillance image over the Internet to the remote computer.

5.   (Original) A surveillance method as recited in claim 4, wherein the remote computer is one of a personal computer and a network server.

6.   (Cancelled)

7.   (Previously Presented) A surveillance method as recited in claim 1, wherein said notifying further comprises:

providing a distinctive audio or visual indication on the remote computer to notify the interested user of the receipt of the activity condition after the electronically mailed surveillance image arrives at the remote computer.

8.   (Previously Presented) A system for providing remote visual monitoring of a location, said system comprising:

a camera for obtaining an image of the location;

a remote computer having a display device capable of viewing images, said remote computer being remote from the location;

a local general purpose computer operatively connected to said camera, said local general purpose computer operates to receive the image from the camera and to determine whether an activity condition is present,

wherein, prior to providing remote visual monitoring, said local general purpose computer is configured so as to automatically notify a predetermined user via a predetermined mailing address when an activity condition is subsequently detected,

wherein said local general purpose computer automatically forwards the image to said remote computer over a global computer network when the activity condition is present, and said local general purpose computer does not forward the image to said remote computer over the network when the activity condition is not present, and

wherein when forwarding the image to said remote computer over the network, said local general purpose computer automatically creates an electronic mail message for the predetermined user associated with the remote computer, the electronic mail message having the image included or attached thereto, and then automatically sends the electronic mail message to the predetermined user via the predetermined mailing address.

9.   (Previously Presented) A system as recited in claim 8, wherein the network comprises the Internet.

10.   (Cancelled)

11.	(Previously Presented) A system as recited in claim 8, wherein said remote computer obtains the image that has been transmitted and displays the image on the display device.

12.	(Previously Presented) A system as recited in claim 8, wherein said local general purpose computer determines whether an activity condition is present based on the image.

13.	(Previously Presented) A system as recited in claim 8, wherein said system further comprises a motion detector for producing a motion indication signal, and

wherein said local general purpose computer receives the motion indication signal and determines whether an activity condition is present based on the motion indication signal.

14.	(Original) A system as recited in claim 13, wherein said motion detector and said camera is directed at the location from approximately the same direction. .

15.	(Original) A system as recited in claim 14, wherein said motion detector is mounted on said camera.

16.	(Previously Presented) A system as recited in claim 8, wherein said system

further comprises a security system having at least one sensor, and

wherein said security system detects an alarm condition, the activity condition is made to be present.

17.   (Previously Presented) A system as recited in claim 8, wherein said system further comprises a security system having at least one sensor, and
· wherein said security system detects an alarm condition, said local general purpose computer causes the image and alarm status information to be forwarded over the network to said remote computer.

18.   (Previously Presented) A system as recited in claim 17, wherein the image and the alarm status information are displayed on a display device of said remote computer.

19.   (Cancelled)
20.   (Cancelled)
21.   (Cancelled)
22.   (Cancelled)
23.   (Cancelled)
24.   (Cancelled)
25.   (Cancelled)

26.   (Previously presented) A method for detecting an activity condition using a camera, comprising the acts of:
(a) receiving a reference image from a camera directed in a predetermined direction;
(b) storing a reference image;
(c) receiving a current image from a camera directed in the predetermined direction;

(d) comparing the current image with the reference image to detect an activity condition; and

(e) signaling an alarm condition when said comparing detects the activity condition; the signaling of the alarm condition including the automatic transmission of an electronic mail message over a network to a remote computer, the message including at least one image from the camera to enable viewing of the activity condition that caused the signaling of the alarm condition,

wherein the electronic mail message is transmitted to an electronic mail address as was previously arranged during configuration.

27.   (Previously presented) A method as recited in claim 26, wherein said signaling (e) of the alarm condition produces an audio sound.

28.   (Previously presented) A method as recited in claim 26, wherein said signaling (e) of the alarm condition comprises:

storing a sequence of images from the camera upon detecting the activity condition so as to obtain a visual record of the alarm condition.

29.   (Previously presented) A method as recited in claim 28, wherein said signaling (e) of the alarm condition further comprises:

producing an audio sound upon detecting the activity condition.

30.   (Previously presented) A method as recited in claim 29, wherein said comparing (d) of the current image with the reference image to detect the activity condition comprises:

determining a difference value between the current image and the reference image;

comparing the difference value with a predetermined threshold value; and

detecting the activity condition when the difference value exceeds the predetermined threshold value.

31.   (Previously presented) A method as recited in claim 28, wherein the electronic mail message being transmitted includes a plurality of images temporally proximate to the detection of the activity condition.

32.   (Cancelled)

33.   (Cancelled)

34.   (Cancelled)

35.   (Cancelled)

36.   (Cancelled)

37.   (Cancelled)

38.   (Cancelled)

39.   (Previously presented) A method for operating a general purpose computer to detect an activity condition using a camera, comprising the acts of:

(a) receiving a reference image from a camera directed in a predetermined direction;

(b) storing a reference image;

(c) receiving a current image from a camera directed in the predetermined direction;

(d) comparing the current image with the reference image to detect an activity condition;

(e) signaling an alarm condition when said comparing detects the activity condition without using any special purpose hardware other than the general purpose computer and the camera;

(f) transmitting a message over a global computer network to a remote computer, the message including at least the current image, wherein the

message being transmitted to the remote computer is an electronic mail message; and

(g) configuring, prior to said receiving (a), storing (b), comparing (d), signaling (e) and transmitting (f), the general purpose computing device so as to automatically transmit an electronic mail message using a predetermined mailing address when an activity condition is subsequently detected.

40.   (Previously presented) A method as recited in claim 39, wherein said signaling (e) of the alarm condition produces an audio sound.

41.   (Previously presented) A method as recited in claim 40, wherein said signaling (e) of the alarm condition comprises:

storing a sequence of images from the camera upon detecting the activity condition so as to obtain a visual record of the alarm condition.

42.   (Previously presented) A method as recited in claim 41, wherein said signaling (e) of the alarm condition further comprises:

producing an audio sound upon detecting the activity condition.

43.   (Previously presented) A method as recited in claim 42, wherein said comparing (d) of the current image with the reference image to detect the activity condition comprises:

determining a difference value between the current image and the reference image;

comparing the difference value with a predetermined threshold value; and

detecting the activity condition when the difference value exceeds the predetermined threshold value.

44.   (Previously presented) A method as recited in claim 41, wherein the electronic mail message being transmitted includes a plurality of images temporally proximate to the detection of the activity condition.

45.   (Cancelled)

46.   (Cancelled)

47.   (Previously presented) A method as recited in claim 39, wherein said comparing (d) of the current image with the reference image to detect the activity condition comprises:

determining a difference value between the current image and the reference image;

comparing the difference value with a predetermined threshold value; and

detecting the activity condition when the difference value exceeds the predetermined threshold value.

48.   (Previously presented) A method as recited in claim 47, wherein the message includes at least a video clip containing images from the camera that were obtained from the camera during or proximate in time to when the activity condition was detected, thereby enabling viewing of the activity condition that caused the signaling of the alarm condition.

49.   (Previously presented) A method for operating a general purpose computer to detect an activity condition using a camera, comprising the acts of:

(a) receiving a reference image from a camera directed in a predetermined direction;

(b) storing a reference image;

(c) receiving a current image from a camera directed in the predetermined direction;

(d) comparing the current image with the reference image to detect an activity condition;

(e) signaling an alarm condition when said comparing detects the activity condition without using any special purpose hardware other than the general purpose computer and the camera; and .

(f) transmitting at least the current image over a network to a remote computer upon detecting the activity condition,

wherein the network comprises the Internet, and

wherein the remote computer is an Internet server that stores images from a plurality of different cameras, and wherein an interested user is able to view at least certain of the images by accessing the Internet server via a web browser application on a user computer.

50.   (Previously presented) A method as recited in claim 49, wherein said transmitting operates to transmit at least a video clip containing images from the camera that were obtained from the camera during or proximate in time to when the activity condition was detected.

51.   (Cancelled)

52.   (Previously presented) A method as recited in claim 49, wherein said comparing (d) of the current image with the reference image to detect the activity condition comprises:

determining a difference value between the current image and the reference image;

detecting the activity condition based on the different value.

53.   (Previously presented) A surveillance method for operating a general purpose computer to provide remote surveillance of an internal area of a building, comprising:

receiving a surveillance image from a local camera directed at the internal area of the building;

comparing the surveillance image with a reference image to produce a comparison result;

detecting presence of an activity condition based on the comparison result; and

notifying an interested user of the activity condition when the presence of the activity condition is detected,

wherein said notifying includes at least transmitting the surveillance image to a remote computer over a network automatically when the activity condition is detected,

wherein the network comprises the Internet, and

wherein the remote computer is an Internet server that stores images from a plurality of different cameras, and wherein the interested user is thereafter able to view at least certain of the images from the local camera by accessing the Internet server via a web browser application on a user's computer.

54.   (Previously presented) A surveillance method as recited in claim 53, wherein said notifying further includes sending an electronic mail message to the user's computer to inform the user of the activity condition or the availability of at least the surveillance image at the Internet server.

55.   (Previously presented) A surveillance method as recited in claim 54, wherein said detecting of the presence of the activity condition comprises:

comparing the comparison result with a predetermined threshold;

detecting the presence of the activity condition when the comparison result exceeds the predetermined threshold; and

detecting the lack of presence of the activity condition when the comparison result does not exceed the predetermined threshold.

56.   (Previously presented) A surveillance method as recited in claim 55, wherein said method operates without using any special purpose hardware other than the general purpose computer and the local camera.

57.   (Previously presented) A surveillance method as recited in claim 54, wherein said method operates without using any special purpose hardware other than the general purpose computer and the local camera.

58.   (Previously presented) A system for providing remote visual monitoring of a location, said system comprising:

a camera for obtaining an image of the location;

an Internet server for storing images, said remote computer being remote from the location;

a user's computer having a display device capable of viewing images, said user computer being remote from the location;

a local general purpose computer operatively connected to said camera, said local general purpose computer operates to receive the image from the camera and to determine whether an activity condition is present,

wherein said local general purpose computer automatically forwards the image to said Internet server over a network when the activity condition is

present, and said local general purpose computer does not forward the image to said Internet server over the network when the activity condition is not present,

wherein the network comprises the Internet, and

wherein said Internet server stores the images forwarded thereto from said local general purpose computer, and wherein an interested user is thereafter able to view the images from the local camera by accessing the Internet server via a web browser application on said user's computer.

59.   (Previously presented) A system as recited in claim 58, wherein said system further operates to send an electronic mail message to the interested user to inform the interested user of the activity condition or the availability of images at the Internet server.

60.   (Previously presented) A system as recited in claim 58, wherein said local general purpose computer forwards the image to said Internet server by establishing a network connection to the Internet, and directing the transmission of the image over the Internet to the Internet server.

61.   (Previously presented) A system as recited in claim 58, wherein said local general purpose computer determines whether an activity condition is present based on the image.

62.   (Previously presented) A system as recited in claim 58, wherein said system further comprises a motion detector for producing a motion indication signal, and

wherein said local general purpose computer receives the motion indication signal and determines whether an activity condition is present based on the motion indication signal.

63.   (Previously presented) A system as recited in claim 62, wherein said motion detector is mounted on said camera.

64.   (Previously presented) A system as recited in claim 58, wherein said system further comprises a security system having at least one sensor, and
wherein said security system detects an alarm condition, the activity condition is made to be present.

65.   (Previously presented) A system as recited in claim 58, wherein said system further comprises a security system having at least one sensor, and
wherein said security system detects an alarm condition, said local general purpose computer causes the image and alarm status information to be forwarded over the network to said Internet server.

66.   (Previously presented) A system as recited in claim 65, wherein the image and the alarm status information are displayed on the display device of said user's computer after the interested user accesses the Internet server.

IX.   EVIDENCE APPENDIX
There is currently no evidence entered and relied upon in this Appeal.

X.   RELATED PROCEEDINGS APPENDIX
There are currently no decisions rendered by a court or the Board in any proceeding identified in the Related Appeals and Interferences section.